

SENIOR & SOCIAL SERVICES

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

**WESLEY**  
Community Center

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

CIRCLE OF LIFE  
PROGRAMS

SENIOR & SOCIAL SERVICES

STRENGTHENING  
FAMILIES

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

**2014 Annual Report**



**SENIOR  
& SOCIAL  
SERVICES**



**EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION**



**FINANCIAL  
OPPORTUNITY  
CENTER**



**OUT-OF-  
SCHOOL  
ELEMENTARY  
& YOUTH  
PROGRAMS**



## LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD PRESIDENT

# The Best Kept Secret in Town

Wesley Community Center has been around for over 110 years, but there are many facets of our work that are still not known. Sometimes we affectionately refer to ourselves as the “best kept secret in Houston”. But no more!

In this report, we hope to bring to life some startling facts and perhaps little known elements of Wesley Community Center’s services. There is a section in the report called “Did you know?” We will be sharing events from the year and program activities which may not be known or may not be as familiar as some of our other services. For example, did you know that 44% of those living in the Near Northside neighborhood do not have health insurance? As part of our on-going programming, Wesley provides benefit enrollment information and assistance. While doing this, we are also gathering data for a research project for funders in Houston attempting to provide health care beyond the emergency room. Our Benefit Enrollment Case Manager meets monthly with other providers and is gathering critical health care data.

Besides providing opportunities to learn little known facts about Wesley, we also wanted to share some of our successes. This year we wanted to tell these stories from a different angle while still giving a picture of all of the wonderful activities going on at the Center. Hopefully as you read the report, you will say to yourself, “I didn’t know Wesley Community Center did that!”

In addition, we wanted to highlight some of our partners and supporters who make things happen every day. For example, Wesley now has two licensed therapists from DePelchin Children’s Center on-site providing free counseling services to children and their families. This critical resource is part of an outreach program to provide much needed mental health services to an underserved community.

Thanks to LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) and United Way of Greater Houston’s THRIVE program, Wesley has workforce development training tackling the “middle skill” deficit that Houston’s economy is currently facing. Our basic skills classes held daily at the center are preparing individuals to take on higher paying jobs at a fraction of the cost and time typically required to accomplish this goal. These are just a few of the highlights in this report so please read on!

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, Staff and Supporters, thank you for a wonderful 2014. However, we are not done. Hold on to your hats for 2015 as we look forward to even more good news that will assist us with our mission to “help people help themselves and each other”.



Diana Garbis  
Executive Director



Ron Restrepo  
Board President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Diana Garbis".

Diana Garbis  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Restrepo".

Ron Restrepo  
Board President



# Increasing economic stability

## SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS

**420 individuals** received at least one service from the FOC

**229 individuals** received all 3 services

**93 individuals** participated in an education/training program

## IMPACT

**190 improve net income (45%)**

Average monthly net income increased **\$974**

**158 improved net worth (38%)**

Average annual net worth increased **\$9,241**

Wesley Community Center operates a Financial Opportunity Center (FOC), the first of its kind to be established in Houston. The FOC focuses on improving the financial bottom line for low to moderately low-income individuals and is particularly dedicated to building educational and skill levels and encouraging sound financial practices. Services include:

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT (EARN IT)

Career Development services include assistance with job searches; referrals to employers; job fairs; help with résumé writing; interview practice; coaching on professionalism.

## FINANCIAL COACHING (GROW IT)

Financial Coaching services include group-based financial education involving topics like budgeting and credit repair; one-on-one financial counseling which focuses on solving specific problems or crises.

## INCOME SUPPORT (KEEP IT)

Income Support services include determining clients' eligibility for public benefits.

## CLIENT PROFILE: HILDA

### Building a Bridge to the Future

We can always find reasons to blame for our lack of success. We had a poor education, we don't have any money, and no one will give us a break. Hilda could give all of these excuses as a reason to fail. Just a few years ago she did not have a high school diploma and was trying to raise three children with a minimum wage job. Her husband was unemployed and they were



barely making ends meet. Then she went to a health fair at her children's school, picked up a flier about the Financial Opportunity Center at Wesley and came to the center. Once she took this first step, she never looked back.

Through the help of the Education and Financial Coaches at Wesley, Hilda was encouraged to complete her GED, develop a budget and continue her education. As she puts it, "once I earned my G.E.D. my life was completely changed". Thanks to a scholarship and assistance with child care (provided by Wesley), Hilda has now graduated from Certified Nurse's Assistant (CNA) training and is employed by Methodist Hospital, a Wesley Center partner. Since being hired at Methodist she has already received two pay increases in a few short months! She is also planning to continue developing her skills by advancing into the E.K.G. Technician training, again with a Wesley scholarship.

How is she doing all of this? In Hilda's words, "Ya'll (Wesley staff) just never stop. You keep pushing us to keep going and now I want to keep going too. My husband is proud of me. And I want to do this for my kids." Wesley gave Hilda the resources and the confidence, but she took the first step and walked through the door. Now she is unstoppable. She is building a career but also building bridge for her family and their future. For Hilda, there were no excuses and now she is a role model, a mentor, and a shining example of what perseverance and hard work can accomplish.



# Creating community by meeting basic needs

## SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS

**17,548 individuals** received food assistance

**3,041 individuals** received case management assistance

**607 households** received financial support that provided housing stabilization (rent and utilities)

**24,780 meals** were served to 132 seniors

Wesley's Senior and Social Services goal is to strengthen the health, well-being, and independence among seniors and assist low and moderately low-income individuals and families obtain financial and economic constancy. The programs include:

## SENIOR PROGRAMMING

Recreation, field trips, daily hot lunches, social events, arts and crafts activities, educational and health seminars, physical fitness, and general fellowship are shared by this vital segment of the community.

## ADULT AND FAMILY SERVICES

Wesley sustains individuals and families in crisis by providing critical short-term assistance through rent and utility assistance, emergency food, case management, and community referrals.

## FOOD CO-OP & FOOD PANTRY

Wesley helps families maximize their monthly cash flow by providing food at an affordable price.

- Seniors receive \$20+ worth of groceries for a \$10 fee
- Monthly distribution of fresh fruit and vegetables at Food Fairs
- Free emergency food assistance to families in crisis

## CLIENT PROFILE: ALEJANDRO Today is a Good Day

When the staff at Wesley describes Alejandro, words like kind, humble and sincere come to mind. In fact most cannot say enough about what he does



for the organization and why he is one-of-a-kind. According to one staff, there is no one else like him. "He is one of the few people you meet in life that makes you want to do better – to strive for more".

Alejandro, also affectionately known as "Alex" came to Wesley three years ago after retiring from a local factory in the neighborhood. Realizing he had too much time on his hands, he wasted no time looking for something to do. He found Wesley and the rest was history. He joined the senior program, but found he got more out volun-

teering and started working in the kitchen feeding the Seniors. Now he gets up at 4 a.m. every day and arrives at Wesley ready to work by 8. After putting in four hours at the Senior Program, he moves over to another critical program, Wesley's food pantry. Here he can be found sorting and bagging food or cleaning the facility. He knows how critical food is to the many seniors living on a fixed income and it makes him feel good to help his neighbors. Having a sense of purpose keeps him young as it does for most of the seniors that come to Wesley every day.

When asked why he comes to Wesley, he only smiles and says that he loves it. Wesley gives to him and he in turn wants to give back to others. For Alex, it is a philosophy and a way of life. When he greets the seniors coming in the door and they complain about ailments, he tells them – "Don't worry – you woke up today, so it is a good day". For Wesley, every day that Alejandro graces our door is a good day too.





# Early learning for an equal start

### SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS

**240 children** received early childhood education program services

**160 parents** received child development education and training

### IMPACT

**84% of children** reached developmental milestones for their age group

**88% of children** demonstrated competencies in pre-kindergarten development

**100 % of children** demonstrated skills and abilities to succeed in Kindergarten

Wesley's Early Childhood Education Program strives to enhance cognitive, emotional, and social development targeting pre-school age children from low to moderately low-income households.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFERS:

- Access to high quality educational programming
- Certified teachers implementing best practices
- Early identification of learning disabilities
- Parent workshops and training in child development education

**In Wesley's service area, 4 of every 10 residents live below the poverty line. The child poverty rate is even more troubling, with 41% of children under age 18 living below poverty (ACS 2007-2011 Census). Among students attending the neighborhood's schools, 92% qualify for free/reduced lunch, a further indication of poverty levels (HISD, 2012).**

### CLIENT PROFILE :

### GRANDPARENTS RAISING THEIR GRANDCHILDREN

## Behind the Smiles

Every story we tell about the Early Childhood program starts with how we offer educational opportunities to children to give children an even start. But there is another side to the story. Over 25% of the children in the ECE center are not living with their parents. Wesley is not just a place to learn but a place where grandparents and great-grandparents can care for their grandchildren in their own home.

These unsung heroes that care for these children often do so with limited resources, many caring for more than one child. Most did not expect to be raising children at their age. As one grandparent put it, "she sometimes finds herself longing for the empty nest", but when the children moved in "so did sacrifice".

Wesley is able to scholarship many of these families, allowing the grandparents the opportunity to stay employed. Most of these courageous souls are keeping these children with few resources to help with the cost. That is where Wesley comes in. Besides child care, families often receive school supplies, holiday assistance and other case management services. Many families also receive free counseling services through DePelchin Children's Center located onsite. We want our children to thrive and grow as the special children that they are. It is important that the whole child be supported at Wesley.

When you walk down the halls of the child care center you can hear the children's laughter. For a few hours every day we lighten the burden for their families and give them a reason to smile.



# Building character and enriching lives

## SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS

**262 youth** participated in daily after school activities

**162 youth** participated in character development programs (CLAW)

**149 youth** participated in summer enrichment programs

**156 parents** received youth services and/or attended parent education support programs

## IMPACT

**88% of youth** demonstrated social competence by **learning to resolve conflict effectively**

**80% of youth** are optimistic about their **future**

**86% of youth** planned ahead and **made good choices**

Wesley's Youth Programs offer after school and summer services and activities Monday through Saturday. Children and youth are grouped by age and participate in age-appropriate activities. The programs concentrate on three main areas of development:

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Activities include homework assistance, literacy exercises, academic tutoring, and computer skills training.

## HEALTHY LIVING/ENRICHMENT

Activities include field trips, arts and crafts, and indoor and outdoor recreation.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Activities include discussions that promote positive decision-making, effective communication, coping with stress, anger management, and self-control.

## CLIENT PROFILE: DAVID

### The Music in Me

When you walk down the streets of the Near Northside, you are likely to see teenage boys kicking a soccer ball or shooting hoops. What you are not likely to see is someone carrying a violin.

That is unless you are watching David.

Starting his music career in the second grade, David immediately fell in love with the sounds that he could make when he played his instrument.

David moved into the orchestra in 7th grade but really found his true interest when he joined the High School's Mariachi band. This has given him the opportunity to perform around the city including in professional gigs and recording studios. His love of music has also expanded to learning other instruments such as the keyboard, guitar, and vocals. It has also fueled his interest in going to college to pursue a music career.

David started coming to Wesley's youth program, four years ago. He has participated in field trips, arts, music, dance, and sports. He is as good on the soccer field as in the music studio and practices with Wesley's soccer team. He also has learned a lot from the Wesley staff especially one young employee, Carlos, who encourages him to pursue his dreams.

Wesley can't take credit for this young man's talent but we can do our part in helping him along his way. That is one reason Wesley's youth program exists. We provide a positive environment and opportunities for youth in the Near Northside to be "more than". Maybe someday we will say "we knew David when" because we know this young man is going to be a success!



VISIONING FORWARD

# Did You Know?

Did you know that **FORTY-FOUR PERCENT** of those living in the Near Northside neighborhood do not have **HEALTH INSURANCE?**

Wesley provides on-site benefit enrollment information and assistance and is gathering critical data for a research project for funders in Houston attempting to provide health care beyond the emergency room.

Health



Education

Did you know by the time a **LOW-INCOME CHILD GETS TO FIFTH GRADE**, they can be behind the average middle-class child by **OVER TWO GRADE LEVELS DUE TO SUMMER LEARNING LOSS?**

Over **NINETY-SIX PERCENT OF THE CHILDREN** in the Northside neighborhood are considered **ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED.**

Wesley provided a wide array of enrichment activities throughout the **SUMMER IMPACTING 149 CHILDREN.**





# Food

Did you know that **FORTY-TWO PERCENT** of families living in the Near Northside reported experiencing **FOOD INSECURITY** at least once?

Wesley provided **FREE PALLETS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES TO 2,971 FAMILIES** through monthly food fairs, distributing over **491,894 POUNDS OF FOOD** to the neighborhood in 2014.

Did you know that **FORTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF THE ADULTS** in the Near Northside community do not have a **GED OR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA?**

Wesley has provided over **100 SCHOLARSHIPS** to pursue high demand **HEALTH CARE POSITIONS** including Certified Nursing Associates, Phlebotomy, Electrocardiography (EKG), and Patient Care Technician certifications. Wesley also provides workforce funds to provide a range of support such as transportation and child care to protect against students being derailed from their educational pursuits.



# Money

# Our community of supporters

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First Methodist Houston -Adelphi Class  
First United Methodist Conroe  
Good Shepherd United Methodist Church  
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**(Middle/High School)**

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**(4th & 5th Grade)**

Marlen Rodriguez

**Youth Development Specialist:**

Carlos Rodriguez

Brenda Salas

# Financial report for 2014

**REVENUE**

Individual Contributions	\$238,595
Private	\$646,490
Church	\$124,229
In-Kind	\$341,300
United Way	\$769,136
Government	\$465,643
Program Fees	\$193,423
Special Events	\$132,214
Other	\$19,614
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$2,908,107</b>

**EXPENSES**

Early Childhood	\$506,898
Youth	\$297,107
Senior and Social	\$1,183,099
Financial Opportunity	\$547,120
Management & General	\$231,503
Development	\$140,380
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,323,104</b>

**ASSETS**

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$370,409
Prepaid Expenses	\$24,740
United Way Funding Allocated for the Next Fiscal Year	\$331,503
Accounts Receivable, Government, Grants and Fees	\$77,055
Other Accounts Receivables	\$15,391
Land, buidlings, equipment	\$2,330,666
Restricted Investments	\$75,500
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$3,225,264</b>

**LIABILITIES**

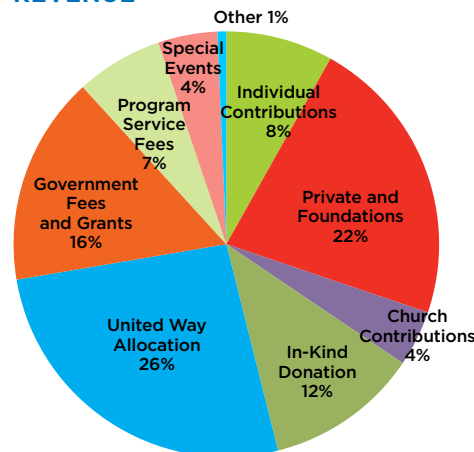
Accounts Payable	\$38,727
Payroll	\$22,072
Deferred Revenue	0
Bank Note Payable	\$205,368
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$266,167</b>

**NET ASSETS**

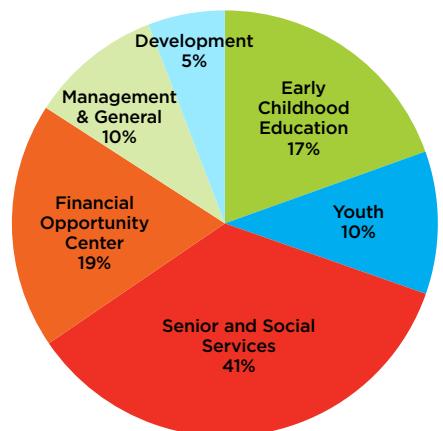
**\$2,960,381**



**REVENUE**



**EXPENSES**







WESLEY  
COMMUNITY  
CENTER

**Wesley Community Center, located in the shadow of downtown in the Northside Village, serves the neighborhood and over 110 other zip codes.**



**WESLEY**  
Community Center *Helping people  
help themselves and each other.*



A United Way  
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